

June 26, 2002

UNDER SECRETARY FOR HEALTH'S INFORMATION LETTER

**TRANSFER COPIES OF VITAL RECORDS TO THE VA RECORDS CENTER AND
VAULT, NEOSHO, MISSOURI**

1. The purpose of this Information Letter is to remind medical facilities of the requirement to ship copies of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) vital records to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Records Center and Vault (RC&V), Neosho, Missouri. In light of the recent events of September 11, 2001, it is extremely important to protect and preserve vital records, which may be needed in case of a terrorist attack or natural disaster.
2. As an essential component of the Federal Government's Continuity of Operation Plan, VA's Vital Records Program is intended to ensure continuity of operations and protect the legal and financial rights of patients and other individuals during and following a national emergency such as a terrorist attack, natural disaster, or other catastrophe. Vital records are records that are so important that their loss would threaten the continuation of certain government operations and activities and would be detrimental to the legal and financial rights of individuals.
3. VA Handbook 6300.8, Procedures for Shipment of Records to the VA Records Center and Vault in Neosho, Missouri, and Appendix A of VHA Records Control Schedule 10-1, Vital Records, provide instructions for shipping copies of vital records to the RC&V. Appendix A and VA Handbook 6300.8 include a listing of VHA vital records. VHA's vital records consist of Construction Contract Records, Patient Data Card Listings, Daily Gains and Losses Sheets, and Patient's or Member's Accounts (PFOP cards). Appendix A also specifies the record media for vital records and the frequency with which the records are shipped to the RC&V.
4. The procedures in VA Handbook 6300.8 and Appendix A of VHA Records Control Schedule 10-1 are to be followed. The requirements contained in those manuals are applicable to all VHA medical facilities.

5. Questions concerning the VA Vital Records Program may be directed to Sherwin Lynch, Communication Service, VHA Office of Information, VA Central Office, at (202) 273-8312.

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Under Secretary for Health

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